

## 1997 LIVESTOCK REVIEW

**SUMMARY** - Colorado farmers and ranchers had 2 percent fewer cattle and calves on hand as of January 1, 1998 than they did one year earlier while the number of sheep and lambs was unchanged. The December 1, 1997 inventory of all hogs and pigs was 25 percent larger than a year earlier and the December 1, 1997 inventory of all chickens was up 13 percent. Colorado ranks 10th in the number of all cattle and calves, 4th in the number of all sheep and lambs, 15th in the number of all hogs and pigs, and 23rd in the number of all chickens. The state also ranks as the 4th largest cattle feeder with marketings of more than two million head of fed cattle annually in each of the past 16 years. Colorado ranks 2nd in the number of market sheep and lambs. More than one million head of sheep and lambs have been slaughtered in the state in each of the last 18 years, making Colorado the Nation's largest producer of lamb.

The state's dairy industry has been very stable for more than 20 years, with an annual average number of milk cows fluctuating between 70 and 85 thousand head. In 1996, disease and other problems within the bee industry dropped the number of bee colonies by one third from the previous year to 30 thousand colonies and honey production dropped 18 percent to 2.2 million pounds. Some recovery in colony numbers was made in 1997 but honey production declined again as per colony yields declined further. The state's trout producers have sold more than \$2 million of fish of various sizes each year since estimates were begun in 1989.

The total inventory value of the cattle, sheep, hogs, and chickens on hand at the beginning of the year (using the January 1 and December 1 reference dates) was \$2.12 billion, up 10 percent from the comparable value of \$1.93 billion one year earlier. Inventories were larger than a year for each species except cattle. The value per head was higher than the previous year for cattle and chickens, unchanged for sheep, and lower for hogs.

Pasture and range feed conditions were rated mostly good to fair during the March through June 1997 period. Hot, dry weather beginning late June through July resulted in some deterioration of pasture and range forage condition. Widespread precipitation the last week of July improved pasture and range feed condition back into the mostly good to fair ratings in August. Condition advanced into the excellent rating in several areas during September, after which the seasonal drying of forage began during October. Heavy snows during late October blanketed much of the southern portions of the state which prevented late season grazing and required some early supplemental feeding of livestock. Some areas were snow covered for more than a month. Most northern areas were snow free during the winter.

**CATTLE AND CALVES** - The January 1, 1998 inventory of all cattle and calves declined 2 percent from a year earlier to 3.1 million head. The number of cattle and calves in feedlots being fed for the slaughter market increased 1 percent to 1.14 million head and accounted for 37 percent of the state's total inventory. During 1997, there were 295 feedlots of all sizes in operation in Colorado. Those feedlots marketed just under 2.6 million head of fed cattle for the slaughter market compared with 2.32 million marketed from 285 lots in 1996. The 19 largest feedlots marketed 71 percent of the annual total in 1997. The number of beef cows, at 816,000 head, declined 10,000 head from the previous year while the number of milk cows was unchanged at 84,000 head on hand at the beginning of 1998.

There were 900,000 heifers 500 pounds and over on hand at the beginning of 1998, down 10,000 head from the previous year. Of that total, 150,000 were being kept for beef cow replacement (down 3 percent) and 45,000 head were being kept for milk cow replacement (unchanged from 1997). The remaining 705,000 were other heifers (down 1 percent) of which 480,000 were being fed for the slaughter market in feedlots with a capacity of 1,000 head or larger. The January 1, 1998 inventory also included 1,020,000 head of steers weighing 500 pounds or more (down 1 percent) of which 635,000 were in feedlots with a capacity of 1,000 head or larger. Of the 1,140,000 head of cattle on feed, 1,120,000 head were in feedlots with a capacity of 1,000 head or larger. The number of bulls weighing 500 pounds or more was unchanged from the previous year at 50,000 head. The number of calves (steers, heifers, and bulls weighing under 500 pounds), at 230,000 head, was down 8 percent from the previous year. The 1997 calf crop in Colorado totaled 860,000 head, 1 percent smaller than the 1996 crop of 870,000 head.

Milk production during 1997, at 1.68 billion pounds, was up 3 percent from the previous year to a new record high. The annual average number of milk cows on hand was unchanged from a year earlier at 84,000. Producers obtained a new record high average production of 19,988 pounds per cow in 1997.

The total inventory value of all cattle and calves in Colorado as of January 1, 1998 was estimated at \$1.98 billion, 10 percent higher than the \$1.80 billion inventory value for January 1, 1997. The average value of \$640 per head represented an increase of \$70 per head from the previous year. The number of operations with cattle at any time during 1997, at 13,000, was up 4 percent from the previous year. The number of beef cow operations was unchanged at 9,500 and the number of milk cow operations was also unchanged at 900 for 1997.

**SHEEP AND LAMBS** - The January 1, 1998 inventory of all sheep and lambs in Colorado was unchanged from a year earlier at 575,000 head. The total breeding sheep and lamb inventory as of January 1, 1998 was down 4 percent to 240,000 while the number of market sheep and lambs increased 3 percent to 335,000 head. The number of ewes one year old and older, at 200,000, was down 5 percent from January 1, 1997 but the number of rams one year old and older, at 7,000 head, was unchanged. The number of replacement lambs less than one year of age was also unchanged from a year earlier at 33,000 head. The 1997 lamb crop of 225,000 head was down 6 percent from the number born in 1996.

On January 1, 1998, the 335,000 head of market sheep and lambs consisted of 2,000 sheep and 333,000 lambs. The 333,000 head of market lambs were estimated to be in the following weight groups: 2,000 head weighing less than 65 pounds, 2,000 head in the 65 through 84 pound category, 115,000 head in the 85 through 105 pound category, and 214,000 head weighing more than 105 pounds.

The January 1, 1998 inventory value of all sheep and lambs in Colorado was estimated at \$60.38 million, unchanged from a year earlier. Both the inventory and the average value per head remained unchanged from the previous year. The average value was \$105.00 per head for each year.

The number of operations in the state with sheep, at 1,200, resumed the long term downward trend by dropping 100 from the previous year. During the 1980's, the number of operations for each year fluctuated between 2,200 and 2,600. Since 1988, the number of operations dropped from 100 to 300 each year until 1996 which was unchanged from the previous year.

**HOGS AND PIGS** - The December 1, 1997 inventory of all hogs and pigs in Colorado was 790,000 head. This was a 25 percent increase over the December 1, 1996 level and the largest inventory number on record. The previous record high was in 1944 when 774,000 hogs and pigs were on hand. Except for 1992 when the inventory was the same as the previous year, inventories have increased each year since 1987. The December 1, 1986 inventory number of 190,000 head of all hogs and pigs was the lowest since 1965 when 169,000 head were on hand as of December 1 of that year.

The December 1, 1997 breeding hog inventory increased 19 percent from a year earlier to a record high 160,000 head. The market hog inventory of 630,000 head increased 27 percent, also a new record high for the state. The state's total pig crop for 1997 was a record high 1,700,000, up 19 percent from the 1996 pig crop of 1,434,000 head.

The 200,000 sows farrowed during 1997 increased 20 percent from the previous year. Producers averaged 8.5 pigs weaned per litter for the year compared with 8.6 pigs per litter in 1996.

The December 1, 1997 inventory value of all hogs and pigs was placed at \$69.5 million, 10 percent higher than a year earlier. The average value, at \$88.00 per head, declined \$12.00 per head from the previous year. The number of operations with hogs during 1997 declined 100 from a year earlier to 1,000. As with numerous other states, the number of hogs and pigs are being concentrated in fewer, but larger, operations.

**CHICKENS AND EGGS** - The all chicken inventory in Colorado as of December 1, 1997 totaled 4.62 million birds, up 13 percent from the 4.08 million on hand one year earlier. The total number of layers increased 10 percent to 3.67 million. Of that total, 1.91 million were one year old and older (up 5 percent) and 1.76 million were less than one year of age (up 15 percent). The total inventory also included 229,000 pullets 13 to 20 weeks of age, 543,000 pullets less than 13 weeks of age, and 176,000 other chickens. During the period from December 1, 1996 through November 30, 1997, the state's laying flocks produced 855 million eggs, up 3 percent from the 827 million eggs produced a year earlier.

The total inventory value of all chickens was \$10.16 million, up 19 percent from a year earlier as a result of the larger inventory and a 5 percent increase in the value per head. The average value per bird was \$2.20, up 10 cents from the December 1, 1996 average.

**BEEES AND HONEY** - Honey production in Colorado during 1997 totaled 1.9 million pounds, down 13 percent from 1996. The number of colonies increased from 30,000 the previous year to 35,000. However, the yield per colony dropped from 74 pounds in 1996 to 55 pounds in 1997. The 1997 honey crop was valued at \$1.58 million, down 16 percent from \$1.75 million for the 1996 crop. Producers received an average of 82 cents per pound for honey sold in 1997, down 3 cents from a year earlier. Producer stocks of honey on hand as of December 15, 1997 totaled 982 thousand pounds, 13 percent lower than the 1.13 million pounds on hand as of December 15, 1996.

**TROUT** - There were 32 operations in Colorado during 1997 which had trout sales of \$2.72 million compared with 36 operations with sales of \$2.42 million in 1996. Producers marketed 940 thousand pounds of food size, stocker, and fingerling fish during 1997 and received an average price of \$2.89 per pound. That compares with 989 thousand pounds sold in 1996 at an average price of \$2.45 per pound.